

THE NATIONAL ERA.

G. BAILEY, JUN., EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR; JOHN G. WHITTIER, CORRESPONDING EDITOR.

VOL. III.

77028

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1849.

651. 14.34

NO. 105.

The National Era is Published Weekly, on Seven
Screws, opposite Old Fellow's Hall.

TERMS.

Two dollars per annum, payable in advance.
Advertisements not exceeding ten lines inserted
three times for one dollar; every subsequent inser-
tion, twenty-five cents.

BUELL & BLANCHARD, PRINTERS.

BUSINESS NOTICES.

As this paper is not sent to any new subscriber, unless paid for in advance, the reception of it will be a sufficient receipt.

Agents or others sending funds to be
deposited, if the amount be considerable, to
particular and draft on New York, Phil-
adelphia, or Baltimore. Smaller amounts may be
transmitted by mail, observing what convenient,
to send large bills on New England, New
York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore banks. Do not send
certified or deposited.

Any day or year man who will procure four sub-
scribers, and send us eight dollars, may have a
fifth copy gratis for one year.

Mr. V. B. Palmer, at his newspaper agency,
New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore,
is duly authorized to procure advertisements for
this paper.

In the last week we have received two or
three requests to have the direction of papers
changed, without informing us what post office,
county, or State, the papers have heretofore been
sent. Without these, we cannot change the direc-
tion.

Agents and others, in sending names, are
requested to be very particular, and have each letter
distinct. Give the name of the Post office,
the County, and the State.

Accounts are kept with each subscriber, and
when we receive money from him on his sub-
scription, it is immediately passed to him.

Agents who notice that we keep an account
with each subscriber, hence accounts will be
kept with agents, and in transmitting money
on which they are entitled to a commission, they
will retain the amount of their commission, and in
all cases, forward the money with the names, so as
to make the account at each subscriber's

agent's office.

Agents and others, who wish to pay with
check or draft, can do so without paying extra
post office stamp, which can now be obtained at
any post office.

We invite the attention of those who are
remitting money to the following table, show-
ing the rates of postage.

We earnestly hope that those who
send money will endeavor to send such bills

as are at the lowest discount:

Washington, D. C. - Far. Maryland - 1-2 dis.

Baltimore - Far. Virginia - 1-2 dis.

New York - Far. Ohio - 1-2 dis.

New England - Far. Kentucky - 1-2 dis.

New Jersey - Far. Tennessee - 1-2 dis.

Western Penn. - Far. Canada - 1-2 dis.

Washington, D. C. - Far. Maryland - 1-2 dis.

Baltimore - Far. Virginia - 1-2 dis.

New York - Far. Ohio - 1-2 dis.

New England - Far. Kentucky - 1-2 dis.

New Jersey - Far. Tennessee - 1-2 dis.

Western Penn. - Far. Canada - 1-2 dis.

THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, JANUARY 1, 1849.

For the National Era.

SKETCHES

MODERN REFORMS AND REFORMERS,

IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

No. 18.—Parliamentary Reform—Origin of House of Commons—Rotten Boroughs—Old Scars—The Unformed House—French Revolution of 1830—Rally for Reform—Wellington Resigns—Grey in Power—His Plan of Reform—Bill Defeated—Firmness of King William—New Parliaments Summoned—Commons pass the Bill—Brougham's Speech in Lords—Peers throw out the Bill—Mr. Farrington—Riots—Again Bill Passed by Commons, and again Defeated by Peers—Ministers Resign—Are Recalled—The Bill becomes a Law—Its Effects.

The origin of the English House of Commons, the principles on which it is based, the changes it has undergone, and the influence it has exerted on public affairs, are studies profitable to the statesman, and interesting to the historian. The interest hitherto on these points must answer our purpose; and those simply to introduce a sketch of the reorganization of this body, by the Reform Bill, in 1832—the greatest innovation upon the old order of things since the temporary overthrow of the monarchy, in 1649.

The House of Commons was instituted in the thirteenth century, when Henry III summoned the counties of the realm to send knights, and the principal cities and boroughs to Parliament. This was done rather to afford him a check upon his arrogant barons, and to procure the sanction of "the Commons" for the uniting property holders were called) to certain subsidies, than to vest in them any independent functions. But, this "third estate" continuing to be summoned in subsequent reigns, its influence increased with the wealth and intelligence of the middle classes, whom it represented, till, what was long regarded by them as a burden, came to be cherished as a right and a privilege; and a supple instrument, originally used by the monarch to strengthen his prerogative, gradually became the weapon of the democracy, to cripple his powers and limit its boundaries.

At first, all the counties, and the largest cities and boroughs, were summoned. Subsequently, as other towns rose to importance, they were added to the list. In process of time, as trade increased, drying up old channels and opening new, many of the ancient cities and boroughs fell into decay. Still, they sent representatives to Parliament. In 1509, the House consented to Parliament, many of them even then representing very small constituencies. From that period, down to the passage of the Reform Bill, no place was disfranchised, (except two or three for bribery, while 256 members were added (including Scotland, and excluding Ireland) by the creation of new, and the revival of old boroughs. During the six centuries which the House had existed, what changes had passed over the Kingdom, sweeping away the foundations of once populous cities, and causing others to rise on barren wastes?

Here we have the origin of "rotten boroughs," those sinks of corruption and seats of power, in towns which, centuries ago, had a flourishing existence, continuing to send representatives to Parliament, long after human being had made his local habitation therein, and whose very names would have perished from the land, but that they were annually recorded on the Parliamentary rolls. One of these has been immortalized by the discussions on the Reform Bill—Old Sarum. Not a soul had dwelt there since the Tudors ascended the English throne—not a tenant of any description had been seen there since Columbus discovered America—nor could the vestiges of its ruins be traced by the antiquarian eye of a Chapman or a Stephens. This sand hill, in 1832, sent many members to Parliament as Lancashire, with a population of a million and a half. Other represented boroughs were in like condition; others could display half score or more of decayed hovels. In the case of these rotten boroughs, the owner of the land, or of the old franchises, who was generally a wealthy Peer, sometimes an aspiring London attorney, commonly an unscrupulous stock-jobbing Jew, by virtue of his single vote designated the representative, subject to the mutations of other real estate and franchises, or auction, or sheriff's sale, or will, or assignment of a bankrupt's effects, or as security for a gambling debt. Not only were they instruments of corruption, but ludicrous labels on the claim of the House of Commons to represent the people, and striking illustrations of extreme inequality in the distribution of political power.

An East India Prince, the Nabob of Arcot, once owned burghs entitled to twenty members of Parliament; and through his English agent, who held the parchment title, he sent that number to the Commons. A waiter at a celebrated gaming house sat for years in Parliament in this wise. He loaned money to a "noble" gambler, who gave him security for the loan on a rotten borough, which sent a member. The waiter reflected himself to the seat in the debates on the Reform Bill, it was stated that certain peers, with an aggregate population of less than 5,000, returned 100 members. Old Sarum, Glaston, Bletchingley, and other decayed boroughs, exerted a controling influence on British legislation, long after many of them had ceased to be the abodes of humanity; whilst Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and other important towns, swarming with life and rich arts and manufactures, had not a single representative. The essence of this system is concentrated in the general fact, that, in 1832, less than two hundred persons, mostly of the privileged order, constituted a majority of the House of Commons!

So enormous an evil was not without an occasional spate of good. Though these coroneted traffickers in Parliamentary seats usually bestowed them on favorites of their own class, there were notable exceptions to this rule. John Horne Tooke, the most radical of all reformers, sat for Old Sarum, the rotteness of all rotten boroughs. Amongst the few sane things which the eccentric Lord Camelford did, was presenting the person of Brougham with this seat. Brougham entered the Commons through the narrow of a nomination borough, though he left it with the plaudits of the largest constituency in the Kingdom. Burke, Romilly, Mackintosh, and other illustrious and liberal names, were indebted to the corporation for their introduction to the Senate of the realm.

The sweeping character of the bill was without an occasional spate of good; the reformers had it all their own way. The Whigs, who had been instrumental in bringing about the Whig majority in 1832, were now the most uncompromising advocates of the new system. Sir R. Ingle, the representative of the bigotry of Oxford University, said, "the place of ministers meant revolution, not reformation."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE NATIONAL ERA.

THE CONTROVERSY IN OHIO, AND ITS SET-
ELEMENT.

COLUMBUS, December 22, 1848.

MY DEAR EDITOR: I see the Eastern prints make queer mistakes in regard to the condition of things here, and I suppose you would be glad to have some reliable information. The papers informed me of a good deal, but there is much, necessary to a correct understanding, which the papers give not.

The beginning of the whole difficulty was the appointment act of last winter. The determination of the Whigs to divide Hamilton county, the seat of the first eight wards of Cincinnati, led to the secession of fifteen Democratic Senators.

They believed the meditated act unconstitutional, in which opinion they had the countenance of the people of the county, and of all over the State. No such division had ever before been attempted by any Legislature.

Unable, as they thought, to prevent, otherwise, the adoption of his measure, Mr. Polk should be pleased to fulfil some of his promises to give them office & patronage.

There are the other members from Pennsylvania.

They have forsaken the principles of the men who elected them, their time is fast approaching their sentence has been passed, and their political death-signal will soon be proclaimed. Justice is slow, but sure, and all those who abandon principle to meet their ends at the hands of the People.

The Hunkers here are loth to fall into the support of the principles advocated by your paper, but no other course remains for them than to join the Whigs.

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Yours, faithfully,

DAVID WILMOT, A FREE SOIL DEMOCRAT.

From the Boston Journal.

THE SOPHISM OF CALHOUN ENDORSED BY MR. POLK.

IN THE PRESIDENT'S LAST MESSAGE HE SAYS, "THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTED TO THE EXPENSES OF THE WAR, (MEANING THE WAR WITH MEXICO,) AND IT WOULD NOT BE JUST FOR ONE STATE TO BE MADE TO PAY FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE WAR, WHICH WAS NOT MADE FOR HER."

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LITERARY NOTICES.

COMPENDIUM OF ENGLISH LITERATURE. By Charles D. Clossel.

The first edition of this excellent work having been exhausted, Mr. Cleveland has issued a second, greatly enlarged and improved, and made it permanent, by stereotyping it. Thirty-five new authors are introduced to us, and new selections are made from the prose writings of the poets quoted in the first edition. The author has shown good taste in adding to his extracts from the productions of English women. This edition will be found to be enriched also, with many more specimens of epistolary correspondence, serving models in that branch of literature.

The quotations are arranged chronologically, from Sir John Mandeville, who was born in the year 1300, to Cowper, who died in the year 1800—and are made from the prose and poetical writings of one hundred and forty-five authors, whose works illustrate the character and progress of English literature during the five intervening centuries.

Prefixed to the selections from each writer is a concise, interesting biographical notice, and interspersed throughout the work we find valuable critical and explanatory notes. While the selections are made so as to present a correct view of the genius of the authors, and to afford a clear conception of the changes in English literature, a sound and pure judgment has carefully excluded whatever might depict a seed of impurity in the mind of the young student.

The volume is handsomely got up by E. C. & J. Biddle, Philadelphia.

ACTION, OR THE CHAOS OF LIFE. New York: D. Appleton & Co. For sale by Taylor & Mauy, Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D. C.

This volume is characterized by more tact and taste in the publisher, than wit or sense in the author. It is a collection of aphorisms, after the model of La Bruyere, we suppose, on Life, Man, and the World. Few men can write proverbs—which require more wit, wisdom, or shrewdness, and power of condensation than often fall to the share of one's brain. There are no ingenuity of method, no interest of continuity, no iron-linked logic, to attract the attention, a succession of isolated thoughts, in unconnected paragraphs or sentences, to keep us awake, must be preeminently good and pregnant. None but Solomons should write aphorisms.

The publishers of Acton have displayed much taste in the external of the volume.

Memorials of Hymns. By David Cramer. New York: Published by the Author. For sale by J. P. Cooke, Bookseller, Baltimore.

The plan of this work is comprehensive, embracing first, biographical, and critical sketches of the authors of the hymns in the Methodist Episcopal collection; secondly a history and review of the poetic works of Charles and John Wesley; thirdly, many curious and entertaining observations, respecting alterations, emendations, omissions, &c. in the various hymns, &c.

Mr. Cramer was in love with his subject, and his work is the result of many years' study and research. A very entertaining and instructive volume has given to the public, of interest, not only to the great Methodist family, but to literary and critical readers generally.

ALICE FANNY'S CHRISTMAS STORIES. New York: D. Appleton & Co. For sale by Taylor & Mauy.

A very pretty book, of simple stories and delightful pictures for little people. The best classics of such works are children, and our little ones say it is "beautiful."

CHRISTIANITY: OR THE FIRST BORN ON PITCAIRN'S ISLAND. New York: D. Appleton & Co. For sale as above.

This next little volume is written by a warm hearted friend of missions, with a view of promoting an interest in the cause to which he is so much devoted. It is an agreeable narrative, illustrating the power of the Bible.

REV. LEIGH RICHMOND'S LETTERS AND COUNSELLS TO HIS CHILDREN. New York: Published by the American Tract Society, P. O. 201, 1840, 20 cents.

"Nowhere," says a contemporary, "was the character of Leigh Richmond more delightful in his correspondence, than in his letters to his children; when he was absent from his children he wrote them, pouring into their minds instruction on all points pertaining to their best welfare for the present and a future life. We know no better gift for the young, and especially young females, than these letters from the author of *Dairymen's Daughter*."

We endorse all this.

GAMBLING IN ITS INFLUENCE AND PROGRESS. By J. H. Green. New York: Lewis Cobey.

Mr. Green knows all the mysteries of gambling, and is indescribable in his labors against the evil. The book contains several dialogues and a few stories of painful interest, designed to operate dismally to the young against games of chance.

GUIDE TO THE SAVIOR. By Prof. C. Finney. Oberlin, J. M. Fitch.

This small, neatly-bound volume, contains six lectures, being part of a course of lectures on entire Sanctification of Life, published in the 3d volume of Mr. Finney's Systematic Theology.

They are published in this separate form, as many persons are unable to purchase the large work, or have not leisure to read it. The vigor of Mr. Finney's mind and pen, and his deep spirituality, have secured him great influence with a wide circle of readers.

NORTHWESTERN FREE SOIL ALMANAC—1840. Chicago, Ill.: Eastman & McCallan.

In addition to the usual Almanac master, there is a large amount of invaluable Free Soil statistics in this Almanac. The publishers, in a note addressed to editors, say—

"The terms are—ten dollars per thousand, three dollars per hundred, and fifty cents per dozen. The postage on each copy is 3½ cents. We will send you the Almanac by mail at the rate of twenty copies for one dollar, and the postage postage ourselves at the Chicago office. Please attend to this immediately, and get as many of the Almanacs into circulation as possible. State, also, that for one dollar sent to the publishers by mail, twenty copies will be forwarded, and the postage paid at the Chicago office."

THE NORTH BRITISH REVIEW. November, 1840. New York: Leonard Scott & Co.

We would direct the attention of our readers to the advertisement of the publishers of the invaluable series of British Reviews. This is the right time to subscribe. Containing, as they do, the speculations of the master minds of Great Britain, respecting the revolutionary and progressive movements in Europe, which for the last twelve months have attracted so much attention, and which will doubtless result in a radical change, not only of the Governments, but social organizations of Europe, they are full of interest and instruction. In one, we find the views of an unbending Conservatism; in another, the bold theories of Radicalism; while the *North British*, the title of which we have given above, is imbued with the liberal, but cautious philosophy of the evangelical school of progressives.

The contents of this number of the *North British* are—

JUVENILE CRIMINALS.

Historical Foundation of the Church of Rome, Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats.

Authorship of the Letters of Junius. Work of Dr. Reid.

Charles Lamb and His Friends. The Castle Rock Papers.

Germany—Its State and Prospects.

We have not room to notice all the articles, but must express our approbation of the liberal but just spirit in which Keats is dealt with. The article on Juvenile Criminals deserves a careful reading.

The Congress of the United States. This body, there-

fore, has, by law, the sole disposition of the question of slavery in the District, and it is not a debatable matter whether the power and the right to abolish slavery in the District is in Congress at all. If it is not in Congress, it does not exist, and slavery might be abolished in every state, and there would be no power to abolish it in the District. The power and the right to abolish slavery in the District are in Congress, and Congress alone, precisely as the power and the right to abolish slavery in the State of Maryland are in the Legislature of Maryland alone.

The popular difference is in the fact, that the people of Maryland elect their Legislature, and slavery could not, therefore, be abolished in this state without their consent; the people of Great Britain, the cheapest and most profitable ones Victoria, can call her own, have uttered a humiliating rebuke to the United States, and he urges upon Congress its abolition.

At the last session, Mr. Goggin, Chairman of the Post Office Committee, made a very able speech in favor of abolishing it, and in favor of the necessity of establishing it; he informed us, of the remonstrances of the Post Office Department and their constituents, to see that their wishes are regarded.

In closing the report, the Directors would say a few words in defense of demanding a lower rate postage than those recommended either by the Postmaster General or the House Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads. We recommend two cents, in preference to three or five cents, because this will bring the stamp into use, and will be of great service to the Post Office.

The Canada came in on Thursday, and went out on Friday, one night earlier than the Post Office, and the New York, following, with the same late news, and down sheets cotton to the old mark; and all this, the rise one day and the fall the next day, for no other reason in the world than because it will bring the stamp into use.

We will, however, be compelled to pay a higher rate, because it will be necessary to have a stamp of greater value, which must be abated, and will no doubt be a general favorite with the patrons of light literature.

For the National Era.

MISSIVE.

BY MISS ALICE CAYER.

Know then this truth, which is a sounder mother, Wherever she sits, it is the brother; Where she sits, Earth is her mother;

Where most degraded, thy soul most increase; Where most exalted, thy soul most decrease;

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Where most exalted, thy soul most increase; Where most degraded, thy soul most decrease;

Where most exalted, thy soul most increase; Where most degraded, thy soul most decrease;

Where most exalted, thy soul most increase; Where most degraded, thy soul most decrease;

Where most exalted, thy soul most increase; Where most degraded, thy soul most decrease;

Where most exalted, thy soul most increase; Where most degraded, thy soul most decrease;

Where most exalted, thy soul most increase; Where most degraded, thy soul most decrease;

Where most exalted, thy soul most increase; Where most degraded, thy soul most decrease;

Where most exalted, thy soul most increase; Where most degraded, thy soul most decrease;

Where most exalted, thy soul most increase; Where most degraded, thy soul most decrease;

